The Sunday School Service.

May, 4th, 1884.

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Christian Love.—1 Cor. 13 : 1—13. Time, 57, A. D.

GOLDEN TEXT: Love is the fulfilling of the law—Romans 13 : 10.

Introduction.—This chapter is said to be the New Testament Psalm of love. We would suppose that when Paul wrote it, he aimed at eloquence, or a specimen of what his pen could do; but it was not an effort of Paul at fine writing that clothes this subject in such exquisite beauty. The author's heart and soul were filled with the theme of which he treats, viz: LOVE. He exalts it infinitely above the the gift of oratory, knowledge, faith, or that of self-sacrifice. It is pleasant to turn from the spirit in which Paul was necessitated to address the Corinthians in the two former lessons, and dwell for a while on this grand theme which the Apostle values more highly than all others.

LESSON.

Verses 1—3.—In the preceding chapter Paul speaks of certain gifts which it is desirable to have. But in this chapter, he teaches that all such gifts without love, are of no value to us neither in this world or in the world to come. Note the gradation of these gifts as Paul presents them. He begins at the bottom of the ladder and reaches the top when he gets to love.

Though I speak with tongues of men. That is, in every language, and with all the eloquence and learning of a Grecian philosopher. Love has no substitute. The gift of speech cannot take its place. Men may be full of words, ready to speak on any subject; they may speak words of comfort and consolation to us, but when love is wanting, they are like the rain that falls on the roof, they are noise only. How sweet are the words that come from one who we know loves us dearly as he loves his own life. They break our grief. They soothe our sorrows and heal our wounds. They are music to our ears. But let one who knows not our hearts, who loves us not, speak to us, and whatever words he may employ, whatever way he may put them together, they make no more impression upon us than sounding brass.

There is much preaching and talk in our Sabbath schools by teachers and superintendents that is little more than what Paul called sound of brass. Not an instrument made of brass which makes sweet music, but simply the senseless *noise* of a piece of brass. So is the speech of many. It is noise and that is about all that can be said of it. Teachers, see that you give your scholars something more profitable, something that will make a deeper and more lasting impression than the sound of a piece of clattering brass. Pupils must be made to feel that you love them, and the only way that you can do this is *to love* them. No imitation of love will arouse such a feeling. It must be *real.*

In the second verse the Apostle ascends one step higher on the ladder and reaches *the gift of prophecy.* But even this gift without love is worthless. What if you could preach by inspiration and predict future events and and had not love for your neighbor and for God. Still more, you might have *all knowledge.* You might know the Bible by heart. In the day of Judgment you would plead, "Lord, I studied the Bible faithfully, I know it word for word." "That is very good," says the Lord, "but knowledge is not the condition of admittance here. You are robed in the gown of learning, but you lack the one genuine characteristic of your Savior—*love.*"

Go up one step higher, *and though I have all faith.* Did not the apostles teach that by believing, having faith in the Lord Jesus, we shall be saved. Yes, so they did. But faith without love, is like knowledge without love, it works evil. A man with strong faith and no love, becomes a bigot, a self-righteous, narrow-minded pharisee. "Faith without knowledge is superstition," and without love it is bigotry.

Still we go up the ladder, *Bestow all my goods to feed the poor.* Would not this be charity? not necessarily. A man may give to the poor and charitable purposes for the mere sake of securing the praise of men. The Scribes and Pharisees were very particular about this. They gave tithes of their possessions. They gave much alms. Prayed always. "But all their works they do to be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward." What reward? Why, the praise of men. That is the reward they aimed at, and they have it. All we give must be the gift of a willing heart—a feeling of love must prompt us to give, if it's to be acceptable. Do not rest your hope on giving to the poor, for many *give*, are liberal, but are not christians, nor will liberality make a man a christian. But christianity will make a man liberal. You remember Cornelius, the centurion. He gave much alms, and prayed always, but after all he needed Christ to save his soul.

One step higher, *Give my body to be burned.* This is a noble example of love, yet it may be without love. Now we have been climbing the ladder step by step, but to reach the top we must go higher. The prize is not to be won by oratory, gift of prophecy, knowledge, faith, by giving our goods to the poor, nor yet by burning our bodies at the stake. We might have all these, and yet fail to gain admittance in the day of judgment. Love must be the ruling and controlling principle of every Christian, otherwise his religion is vain.

Verses 4—8.—In these verses the Apostle tells us what love does and what it does *not* do. There are seven things specified what it will do.

Things Love Will Do.

1. *Suffers long.* Slow to anger, opposed to haste.
2. *Is so kind.* Willing to do good to others. This is the active side of love and manifests itself in beneficence.
3. *Beareth all things.* Everything that will be for the good of others.
4. *Believeth all things.* Certainly not literally all things; for then it would believe the false as well as the true. The idea is that it believes what is not palpably false, has no desire to, and takes no pleasure in doubting the veracity of others.
5. *Hopeth all things.* Has hope for the good there is in others, though it be little.
6. *Endureth all things.* Endures patiently what the good of others requires it to endure.
7. *Rejoiceth in the truth.* Is glad to see truth triumph.

Nine things Love is not and does not.

1. *Envieth not.* It is not jealous. It glories in the welfare and happiness of others. Does not envy the success of others.
2. *Vaunteth not.* Does not make a vain display of its possessions, whether the gift of tongues, knowledge or whatever it may be.
3. *Is not puffed up.* Not proud, but humble; not conceited.
4. *Behaves itself not unseemly.* It is courteous, and pays due regard and attention to civility and propriety. It is not unmannerly. Has respect for decency, and behaves itself in society as becomes one.
5. *Seeks not her own.* It is not selfish. It aims to make others happy. It is not required that we neglect our own well-being, but self is not what we should live for. To be useful to ourselves *and* to humanity is what love demands.
6. *It is not easily provoked.* Controls the temper.
7. *Thinketh no evil.* Does not devise evil against another, "and in doubtful cases takes the more charitable view."
8. *Rejoiceth not in iniquity.* Takes no pleasure in the evil of others; does not delight in their misfortunes, &c.
9. *Never fails.* Suited to all occasions, always in place, and will continue through eternity.

Verses 8—13. Love is eternal. Gift of tongues and prophecy shall cease and fail; knowledge will vanish away, for, as in verse 9th, our knowledge is imperfect, our prophecy is imperfect, all these imperfections shall pass away, and in heaven we shall know as we are known. While all things pass away, there abide faith hope and charity, and even faith shall be swallowed up in sight, hope by actual fruition. Love alone will abide through eternity. How important to have it. More durable and stable than the everlasting hills. Of more value than gold. He whose heart is full of the love spoken of here, has laid up treasures in heaven. O may we have more of that disinterested love that seeks not its own.

Love is not only an eternal grace, but the highest among the eternal. Faith is indeed the condition to our christian life, but love is its completion. Faith but unlocks the door by which we enter into the blessedness of its superior love. Other graces contribute to heaven, love constitutes heaven; for a heart of love in a world of love is heaven. *Whedon.*

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS AND SUPERINTENDENTS.

1. Draw a pair of scales on the board; place in the balance on one side gift of tongues, gift of prophecy, knowledge, faith and self-sacrifice. On the other side the word Love. Have the side of love way down and the other up. Explain that love outweighs all other things.

2. Write on the board the seven things love is and will do, and right opposite, the things love is not and will not do, thus:

1. Love is kind.——1. Love seeks not her own.

3. Write on the board things that are perishable in this life, and, opposite, things not perishable. Thus:

Wood,——Stones, &c.

Then compare the things of this world with eternal things. Write above it: Lay up treasures in heaven.

HONOR GOD.

A. PEARSON.

TEXT—"Honor the Lord with all thy substance."—Prov. 3 : 9.

Do we realize the position in the scale of creation at which we were placed? Some may, but many do not. Of the two grand divisions, inanimate and animate, man belongs to the latter. Inanimate creation is of itself wholly inert; without power to move or act, and cannot subserve its creative design, except by being acted upon by the animate. The animate embraces all forms of animal life, from the tiny monera up through the molusks, reptiles, fishes, birds and quadrupeds, and is complete in its greatest perfection in man, "who was created a little lower than the angels," with reason to plan, and power to execute "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Gen. 1 : 26. God gave the vegetable kingdom for the sustenance of the animal, (verse 30,) but to man he gave dominion over all, (verse 28.) Then these things together, with all their concomitants—dollars and cents, broad farms, cozy homesteads, fine herds of cattle and sheep, are the legitimate substances vouchsafed to us in this promise,—implied command. One man accumulates more than another, as a reward of his superior industry or skill justly exerted, or by taking advantage of his weaker and less skillful, or more generous neighbor. With the latter he could honor the Lord most effectively, by returning that which does not belong to him, to its rightful owner, for this is not properly "his substance," and he cannot honor the Lord with the substance of another. But his legitmate earnings are his, only to use in preference to his neighbor's; for "The earth is the Lord's with its fullness thereof." (1 Cor. x : 26.) Then when the Lord requires us to honor him with our substance, he only asks his own. And if we fail to use, or deliver up the substance intrusted to our care as His stewards, we can expect no more leniency in the day of reckoning, than did the husbandmen in the parable of the vineyard, receive. Mat. xxi : 33-41. It is right that every man provide for his own household. We are ever commanded to do this, and none should be idle or vagrant. Industry is the life of the Christian, and industry is rewarded with gain. But it is clear as the Apostle says, "We brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take nothing out." 1 Tim. vi : 7. The next verse tells us how much we can richly call our own: "And having food and raiment, let us be herewith content (verse 8). But he continues the admonition, and shows the consequence of accumulating riches, instead of duly "honoring the Lord with all our substance." "But they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many hurtful lusts, which draw men to destruction and perdition." "For, the love of money, is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (Verses 9, 10). Then, why is it, that Christian professors, hoping for immortality, insist on accumulating wealth, or laying up treasures here, instead of laborring in their God-appointed sphere, to honor the Lord with all the productions of earth? But how can we do this? Simply by helping on all the God-approved enterprises for good, education, missionary work, the Sabbath school, the publishing house, the church, and the ministry. All these and many other things, as charity to the helpless and worthy poor demand, a disbution of our surplus substance, by which the Lord will be honored and our own soul and spirits thrilled with the conscious approval of righteousness, and our own purified souls will be lifted to God in grateful thanks for His goodness and mercy. A PEARSON.

North Star, Ohio

The Fatal Glass.

There's danger in the glass. Beware
lest it ensnares. They who have
drained it find alas! Too often early
graves. It sparkles to allure. With
its rich ruby light; there is no an-
tidote or cure. Only its course
to fight. It changes men to
brutes; Makes women bow
their heads; Fills homes with
anguish, want disputes. And
takes from children bread.
Then dash the glass
away, and from the
serpent flee; drink
pure cold
water
d a y
b y
d a y
and
w a l k
God's footstool free!

HOW TO BE HAPPY.

HENRY KIZER.

"Just to let thy Father do
What he will;
Just to know he is true,
And be still."

This at least is one of the great and peaceful ways of being happy. We may not in any wise hinder God from executing his own glorious designs in the world, yet we may hinder him from doing toward us and for us what in his infinite goodness he assuredly would do for us if we were willing. It is wise, therefore, ever to let him do as seemeth him good. Had we always our own wills we surely would be miserable; but if we ever do the will of our heavenly Father we shall be happy indeed. Let us follow, day by day, and hour by hour, his gracious leadings, and we shall be supremely blessed; for he will always lead us out of ourselves, away from our strayings in forbidden paths, and guide us by his counsel and afterwards receive us to glory. God knows always our needs and our trials, and can supply our needs out of his infinite mercy and love, while he will deliver us out of all our trials in due season if we trust in him. This is, or may be, another important secret of our happiness here. Let us trust in God evermore and hope in his redeeming grace; love and trust him ever and we must be happy. If we are loving and trustful, obedient and grateful, we cannot be unhappy. Nay, but our days will glide sweetly by, while sunshine will ever fall about our pathway. Our journey then will be filled with heavenly light, and divinely good cheer. Peacefully and happily will our moment's glide by and on. Our souls will be calm and free, if we are truly the sons of God, while our hearts will be bright and blessed. Just let God speak, rule, guide, and bless. Then, oh, then, how happy indeed shall we be. Get nearer the cross, and rise higher in the divine life, and be supremely happy. Let Christ dwell in your heart richly by faith, then will your peace flow as a river, while your joy will be unspeakable.

Bridgewater, Ohio.

A Joyful Face.

"How that biggest sunflower does hold on, Mrs. Jerome! Did you ever see anything so determined to do its best to the last?"

"Yes; I have been noticing it all the day," said mother; "I can see it from my work-table in the kitchen, and it has been a great help to me, that great sunflower has. It has taught me a great many lessons,—patience and courage and joy.

"I cannot look at its face without feeling brighter; for I've thought again and again that it seemed to hold the essence of a laugh. I do not know but most people would call me silly; but only the other day I went out to carry some potato-parings, and, as I threw them upon the waste-heap, I said to myself, 'I wonder if I must do this, day after day, all my life.' You know, when a person is tired and worn, such things do come naturally to mind. Just as I thought it, I looked up, and the sunflower, ever so much taller than I am, was looking down on me,—you know it grows out of the refuse-heap,—and what do you think it seemed to say?

"'Do as I do. If I should spend my time looking down at this garbage-heap, I should get quite sick of life. My roots lie in it; but see I've grown above it. I can look off at pleasant things, and the trees and the sky are open to my view; and so I manage to keep myself happy by getting above the sickening, noisome things.' That was one lesson.

"The holding-on is another. Day after day to keep this restful state, when pleasant friends and pleasant circumstances are lost in the change, is a triumph. "Yes," as she looked again at her tall, nodding, joyful-faced friend, she said, "that sunflower has been to me a friend."

This world is not governed by chance. It is not left to manage itself, and go on at a haphazard rate. There is a wise superintending providence over the affairs of men. Especially does God watch over and care for them that trust in Him. If we are his children, we are assured that all things shall work together for our good. God will so arrange and control circumstances that our best spiritual interests shall be promoted. We may not be able to understand the Divine purpose, but we may rest assured that all our crosses and trials are foreseen by him, and will result in good. We should not, then, complain of the trials and afflictions of life, in whatever form they may come. They may be hard to bear, but if we endure them in a proper spirit, they will bring us nearer to God, and lift us to a higher and better state. Our pathway may be rough and thorny, but if it leads us to our Father's house, we should rejoice that we are permitted to travel in it. Trusting in His grace, and enduring with patience, we may find "jewels in every jeopardy, music in all misery, strength in every sorrow, and a crown above every cross."